



Butterfly Conservation

Minutes of Butterfly Conservation Gloucestershire Branch Annual General Meeting held at Christchurch Abbeydale, Heron Way, Abbeydale, Gloucester, GL4 5EQ, at 2 pm on Saturday 26th October 2019

Minutes:

56 people signed in to the 2019 AGM.

Sue Smith, Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1- Apologies for absence: Vic Polley, Andrew Bishop, Helen Carver, Helen Taylor, Duncan Dine & Becky Dine.

2- Minutes of the 2018 AGM

The minutes of the last meeting were adopted unanimously.

3- Matters arising from the 2018 AGM minutes

There were no matters arising from the 2018 minutes.

4- Reports from Branch Officers:

4.1 Chairman's Report – Sue Smith- (Appendix 1)

4.2 Treasurer's Report (Appendix 2) Serena Meredith. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Chris Tracey, and seconded by Trish Atkinson.

4.3 Membership Report –Trish Atkinson- (Appendix 3)

4.4 Butterfly Recorder's Report – Chris Wiltshire- (Appendix 4)

4.5 Moth Officer's Report – Peter Hugo- (Appendix 5)

4.6 Bill Smyllie/The Masts Report – John Coates- (Appendix 6)

4.7 Rough Bank Report – Chris Wiltshire – (Appendix 7)

4.8 Forest Conservation Officer's Report - Simon Glover – (Appendix 8)

4.9 Back from the Brink Update –Jennifer Gilbert/Julian Bendle – (Appendix 9)

5 - Butterfly Monitoring in Gloucestershire - Trish Atkinson – (Appendix 10)

6 - Election of Officers – There were five people eligible from the present committee who were happy to stand for re-election: Andrew Daw, Serena Meredith, Sue Smith, Chris Tracey and Chris Wiltshire. All five were re-elected with Brian Smith proposing and seconded by John Coates. This was followed by a unanimous vote from members and therefore duly re-elected.

Helen Taylor was formally elected onto the committee, proposed by Peter Hugo and seconded by Chris Tracey.

Karen and David Nicholls were adopted as associate members, proposed by Serena Meredith and seconded by Trish Atkinson.

7- Any Other Business - Following Peter Hugo's Moth report which highlighted the usefulness of irecord App, Trish Atkinson also recommended another App called 'Seek'.

8- Date of next AGM: 24th October 2020 - Venue to be confirmed.

The AGM closed at 3.15pm.

The morning session began with a presentation by Matt Brierley *The Butterfly Effect* Education Officer. Matt gave a wonderful presentation discussing his work in film and documentary making, as well as describing his work inspiring the children of Gloucestershire in the natural world particularly our local butterflies.

The photographic competition winners were announced after the AGM.

Results:

Andrew Daw winner of UK Butterflies with close-up of a 'Green Hairstreak'.

Alastair Hills winner of First Time Entrants with 'Common Blue'.

Chris Tracey winner of UK Moths with a 'Rosy Footman'.

Chris Tracey winner of Overseas Butterflies or Moths with 'Poplar Admiral joins Scarce Fritillaries and a Red Admiral on scats and a dead slow worm'.

Bob Smith was the overall winner with 'Pyrausta Aurata'.

The afternoon concluded with a presentation by John Davies, Head of Butterfly Conservation Reserves. John gave a detailed talk describing the 35+ BC reserves, and insights into the varying management of these reserves to protect Butterflies throughout the UK.

Appendices.

Appendix 1- Sue Smith Chair's Report 2019 AGM

As usual my report relates mostly to the calendar year from January 2019. It has been quite a momentous year. We celebrated the opening of the Bill Smyllie Reserve and the purchase of The Masts in the summer. It's also the Branch's 30th anniversary which we are celebrating today. Our membership reached 1000 (it was 30, 30 years ago), the BftB project continued apace and our education project started in January. You will hear more about these from the other officers. However, following a request from a member about the number of BC volunteer conservation hours, I thought I would concentrate on what volunteers have done for BC.

For the conservation volunteer work parties, the time spent is more closely recorded than for other events. It has been estimated that 316 hours were spent on the Prestbury Hill Reserves for the 2018/9 winter season and together with work on Nottingham Hill and Ravensgate a total of about 400 hours was worked. This, however, does not include odd times when members of the committee have gone up

to Prestbury for *ad hoc* visits/work. It is estimated that 80 hours were contributed at the Bathurst work parties and 100 hours at the Prinknash garden. For Rough Bank the figures are 514. This makes a conservative estimate of 1200 hours.

These figures do not include work that members do on other butterfly sites not owned by BC such as Stinchcombe where Chris Wiltshire runs weekly work parties, Strawberry Banks, Lower Woods, Lineover Wood and various other places.

None of these figures include time taken to walk transects, carry out key sites recording or casual recording.

Since the beginning of the year over 70 events/meetings/activities have been attended either individually or by groups of people. I haven't added the total number of hours for these events, but as you can imagine, they would be considerable.

Thank you to all those who volunteered in any way during the year – it makes life so much easier to have more helpers!

At the South West Regional Branch Liaison meeting held recently at Ilminster, one of the items was volunteer hours. BC Head Office estimate that including the monitoring, recording and conservation delivery on the ground there are 18,000 volunteers. This equates to £14 million worth of effort. The feeling was that this was a low estimate and that the real figure should be much higher.

It is possible that we will all be asked to log our hours more closely next year to try and get a more realistic view of the actual contribution made by committee members and volunteers from the branch.

Various things mentioned in last year's report are on-going – the Butterfly Crescent at Highnam, the nectar garden at Prinknash, together with the Stroud Valleys Project who continue to manage the rest of the garden. I am also pleased to report that we were successful in being awarded a grant from the Cotswold AONB for work on the Bathurst Estate for the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries.

The Branch was asked to give a presentation to the SW Regional Branch Liaison meeting on the Key Sites project. This has been on-going since 2009 and is co-ordinated by Trish Atkinson. Recorders go to specified sites within the county where certain key species have been found. The key site spreadsheet only shows the presence or absence of species and all of the full records get sent on to the County Recorder. Brian Atkinson has put all this information onto QGIS so all the sites are mapped electronically and the information relating to them can readily be seen. This has been invaluable for the BftB project. The National Trust is also liaising with Julian and Chris concerning butterfly records on or close to their land in order to help with their management of sites.

BftB has continued to make an impact in the Cotswolds with work on this project.

I'm sure some of you have attended events run by Jen and Julian during the year.

More on this later from Julian/Jen.

The Butterfly Effect is also starting to have an impact with a new Duke of Edinburgh element. This has been down to a lot of hard work by Karen and David Nicholls. A new project has also been organised at Kingshill Secondary School in Cirencester with an Eco Club and 'rewilding' of part of the school grounds headed by Helen Taylor. You will have already heard about these activities from Matt in his talk earlier. We are so excited by these new innovative projects in the county.

However, both BftB and *The Butterfly Effect* will come to an end at the beginning of 2021 so we must look to the future to secure a legacy from these very important and useful projects.

You may have noticed that I have rarely used the word 'butterfly' and 'moth'!

However, all of the above goes to underpin the work that we all do for these insects, whether that be by conservation work, education or promoting the work to wider audiences and making people aware of the need to conserve areas for wildlife – currently a hot topic!

Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard during the year – it is much appreciated.

Appendix 2- Serena Meredith.Treasurer's report for the year ended 31 March 2019.

At the year end, the funds in the branch bank account had risen from £21707.04 to £29775.85, an increase of £8068.81, due in the main to the receipt of £10866.27 representing 2 years worth of Agri-environmental grant payments for Prestbury Hill Reserve, none having been received in 2017/18. The funds available rose by £9897.21 as represented by the cashbook figures.

The training costs relate to the First Aid course arranged for volunteers from Glos Branch BC, the Woodland Trust and FOLK (Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common), with the latter 2 organisations contributing their share of the outlay amounting to £261.62. Whilst the cost of the conservation events (workshops and evening meeting) appears to have risen substantially, this is due to an error in the audited accounts in the allocation of expenditure in 2017/18 – which understated the events and overstated the committee expenses by the same amount. I am keeping a closer eye on the position this year to ensure that this sort of discrepancy does not recur. Branch newsletter expenditure reduced as the previous year's postage costs had been inflated due to the heavier weight paper used for the BC 50th Anniversary edition of Antennae and the spring 2019 edition cost was not paid until April 2019 so falls outside of the year under discussion. The cost of sales is a figure calculated by HO with reference to the stock remaining on hand at the year end. The AGM costs were reduced as no nomination form for the committee was circulated and the cost for the speaker was less.

Finally, you may have heard Matt Brierley talk this morning about the Butterfly Effect education project, which was brought to fruition by the hard work, drive and determination of Sue Smith with help from others on the committee, HO and with funding from the charity Restore our Planet. The branch has committed to supporting this initiative to the tune of £3000 per annum for 2 years. The first tranche of this was transferred from the branch account in July 2019.

Appendix 3- Trish Atkinson. Membership report.

Membership has continued to rise from 691 household members last year to 736 this year, an increase of 7% which is excellent. However if we take account of joint and family membership, we actually have 1020 individual members in the branch. This is more than three times the number of members in the branch about 10 years ago.

We are really pleased to have reached over 1000 individual members. You may have read in Antennae that to celebrate this achievement we sent a free butterfly walks booklet to the new members who pushed us over the 1000 mark.

Our next challenge is to try to increase the proportion of active and interested members in the branch. Many people join to give financial support to Butterfly Conservation and we really appreciate that but we would also like to see more

members getting more involved by volunteering to help. You have heard from Sue about all the work which volunteers do and how much it is appreciated by Head Office and the branch. However we would like to get more members volunteering which would enable us to do even more. The number of volunteers helping at the work parties on the Prestbury Hill Reserve last weekend was very low. In fact there were only 4 people there each day and that was including the work party leader and first aider. However the good news is that there is lots of work left for us to tackle at our weekday work party on Tuesday! We hope that volunteers find the work enjoyable and interesting and get a real feeling of satisfaction. We do appreciate anything anyone does to help and thank you all for your continued support.

Appendix 4. Chris Wiltshire. County recorder.

The year started with a rather cold dry winter but some snow for a few days in February. It remained drier than usual with some drought effects showing by late May when the rains arrived. June was wet and cool until the last week when the hot weather arrived and lasted until August with the return of cooler conditions but dry again until the third week of September since when it has hardly stopped raining! It has been a windy year too.

Skippers – Small made a bit of a recovery but Essex and Large remained in low numbers while Dingy Skippers were relatively abundant and Grizzled Skippers had an average year.

Whites – Brimstones had a very good year unlike Large Whites which had the worst season since 2012. Small White had its third best year in over 30 years mostly in second generation and Wood White was abundant in F of Dean. Green-veined and Orange Tip had average years but Clouded Yellow was very scarce in Gloucestershire.

Green **Hairstreak** had its third best year in 32 years, Purple Hairstreak and W-letter did not do quite so well. I am aware of two sightings of Brown Hairstreak both from Swillbrook. Small **Copper** only had an average year

Blues – Most of them had a more or less average season but Chalk Hill did not fare so well with poor numbers on many sites eg. Stinchcombe Hill had the lowest count in 32 years. Small Blues were in reasonable numbers but the star of the show was the Large Blue with record numbers on Daneway again.

Duke of Burgundy had mixed fortunes with reasonable numbers on some sites and at least one new site found although not seen on some others.

Red Admiral was hardly to be seen in Spring but good numbers later in the Summer. Very few Small Tortoiseshells seen this year but good numbers of Peacocks and average numbers of Comma and White Admiral. Purple Emperor had a much better year – all four of them! In this family it was the Painted Lady which turned up in good numbers with an influx arriving in the county on 26th June. I saw 24 adults at Coldwell Bottom on 27th June. It had its fourth best year in 32 years. (*show chart*)

Fritillaries – Pearl-bordered did very well in the Cirencester Park woods and even Small P-b was seen in modest numbers in the Dean. Of the larger Fritillaries Dark Green had a much better year than usual for example its fourth best in 32 years on Stinchcombe Hill. Silver-washed numbers were slightly down but still quite good. Marsh Fritillary did a little better but still causing some concern although it did colonise Westley Farm again.

Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper and Small Heath all had average years, Wall is still in trouble with only a few being seen mostly around Cleeve Common & Nottingham

Hill. The star performers were Marbled White, Meadow Brown and Ringlet which all had their best year in 32 years.

To sum up – not a bad year for butterflies.

Chris Wiltshire
County Recorder

26th October 2019

Appendix 5- Peter Hugo. County Moth recorder. Moth Report 2019

Garden Moths: Anecdotal evidence suggests this has been quite a good year for moths. Despite hearing complaints of poor catches earlier in the year, my garden trap has been catching good numbers of moths, especially at the height of summer. On 9th July I recorded **913 moths of 131 species** in just one trap. This is the highest individual catch here in 33 years, although its nowhere near the totals I would catch when I was at school, when the total would sometimes be a couple of thousand or more! Nevertheless, the high totals have caused me to run the trap only on Garden Moth Scheme nights as I'm no longer able to cope with running the trap on every favourable night throughout the year. If you need to know more about what is happening on the Gloucestershire moths scene you really must join Gloucestershire Moths Facebook group where most of the regular enthusiasts report their daily findings. Although I tend not to appear on this site so often as others, I can assure you that a lot is going on behind the scenes.

We have so many moth species in this country that I think just a snapshot should suffice: **Footman moths** have had a particularly good year. On 28th July I recorded **143 Common Footman**, an all time record for me, in a total catch of just under 200 footmen of five species. Being Lichen feeders maybe this suggests we have somewhat cleaner air in our part of the world despite reports in the media? **Privet Hawk moths** have also arrived in record numbers in our garden with an average of 7 per night and a total of 9 in the catch of 9th July. And of course, the Clifden Nonpareil (also known as Blue Underwing) has turned up in increasing numbers in the county this autumn so we now think it must be breeding in the county. It seems almost everyone and his/her dog has caught one of these except Peter Hugo!

Earlier this year on 16th April I joined BBC TV and Michaela Strachan from the Springwatch team to help launch the iNaturalist app at Westonbirt Arboretum. The app has since been launched in most of the major forests and enables users to photograph any species of fauna and flora they see, receive several possible suggestions for identification and record directly onto the database. It's a great citizen science project but I do think that, especially with moths, the records still need to be confirmed by the relevant County Moth Recorders. This was followed on 31st May by a two day **Bioblitz** in which myself, Guy Meredith and Fiona Haynes (Back from the Brink Conservation Officer - Moths) ran ten traps at Westonbirt Arboretum. Despite the cool night and bright moon our ten traps recorded a total of 753 moths of 110 species, which Westonbirt are delighted with. They later said that the moths were the "star of the show" and kept the visitors, especially children, engaged throughout the day. It was great to see the Director of Westonbirt, Andrew Smith, taking such a passionate interest in moths. In fact he stayed with us throughout the day and wrote down the species lists as we called them out. Andrew later accompanied me on the butterfly transect where we discovered several large colonies of **Chimney Sweeper Moth**. Westonbirt now has four distinct colonies of local moths that we can now pinpoint: the protected by law **Barberry Carpet**,

several large colonies of **Chimney Sweeper**, a distinct colony of **Map-winged Swift**, very local in the county and whose larvae feed on roots of Bracken and **Northern Winter moth**, the only known distinct colony in Gloucestershire. There is surely so much more to discover here and we are lucky to have access the restricted parts at night time.

Other Moth Events: Bob Smith also took part in a Bioblitz in the Stroud area but I do not have any details of this at present, we held the annual **Yew Tree Farm moth morning** in June. The night was clear and very cold so numbers of moths were greatly reduced compared with previous years with a total of 48 species of moths, but the event was a great success with the public and I was able to make some excellent contacts. On the same day Bob and Sue Smith attended **Open Farm Sunday** at Guiting Power in the north Cotswolds. Bob had run some traps there overnight and was able to add new species to this site. And talking of Bob, he has taken part in a number of events this year as usual, involving adults and children, including Stroud's annual Festival of Nature where possibly thousands of members of the public will have seen his moth displays. Sue Smith and myself ran a successful **Moth and Butterfly identification course** for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust at Lower Woods. The moth numbers at Lower Woods are so impressive it reminded me that it is about time we undertook some further recording at this site.

Guy Meredith has, as usual, continued his activities throughout the county and one never knows where he is likely to be at any one time as he continues to target species with his usual success. His latest moth species list for **Rough Bank** is 672 which is very impressive considering the number of moth species when we acquired the reserve was just 4. There is currently an issue regarding the cattle at Rough Bank which has prevented us from running traps in the Myers fields throughout much of the summer. I have only been able to run traps there on one occasion this year and Guy has had to resort to running his traps, at times, in the car park. A few years ago when I invited a group to trap on the reserve overnight, the highest number of individuals and species was recorded on the Myers fields so we may well be missing an opportunity here.

Steve French administers an extremely successful **Gloucestershire Moths Facebook group** which now has 197 members. The group is performing an excellent job of inspiring both newcomers and experts and even attracts members from outside the county. Steve continues to surpass all expectations with his phenomenal garden moth records. He would make an ideal moth officer but unfortunately I'm unable to raise a sufficiently high enough bribe!

We now have five traps operating within the **moth trap loan scheme** but because of the large waiting list I made a decision to be selective and place the traps in areas where we need more recording. At the present time we have traps operating in the following areas: Kingswood, Bristol, Wickwar, Slad (this trap is at Laurie Lee's old cottage), Coleford and at another lovely site in the Forest - Flaxley Rectory.

Roger Gaunt's Newsletter continues to be produced on a monthly basis and highlights the most interesting observations he has received. Let me know if you would like to be included on his email distribution list.

The long awaited **Moth Atlas** is finally due to be published on 12th December. As one of the sponsors I've been invited to the launch in Oxford and you may not be surprised to learn that the moth I sponsored was the Plumed Prominent.

And finally I have now been your Moth Officer for 13 years and during this time I've arranged numerous activities, most notably until recently, the annual Plumed Prominent moth event which has attracted enthusiasts from all over the country. I have set up and operated the moth trap loan scheme and spend a lot of my time encouraging new moth recorders, helping them with their identifications and generally persuading members of the public of the importance of moths in the environment. I also look after the branch moth traps and the electrical safety of the branch equipment and am responsible for keeping the branch first aid kits up to date. This is in addition to my role as Branch Contact, not to mention the fact that I also volunteer for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Forestry England.

Why am I telling you all this? It's because, as usual, I can't stop myself feeling guilty that I am not 100% as up to date with what is actually going on in the local moth scene as I would like to be. There are now quite a few moth experts in our county and in our branch who have more knowledge of our local moths than myself - some of whom are studying moths as a result of my persuasion so perhaps I can take some comfort from that.

All the above makes it sound as though I am about to offer my resignation. But I'm not. I just hope you approve of the way I approach my role and am happy to continue doing what I can for as long as I am able to, with your authority.

PH 26/10/19

Appendix 6 – John Coates. The Bill Smyllie/The Masts report.

This year, we celebrated 25 years of the opening of the Prestbury Hill Reserve with an open day in August. We led a couple of walks on both The Masts and Bill Smyllie section. It was a very windy day but there were some butterflies to be seen in the sheltered spots.

Butterflies were plentiful this summer with two consecutive weeks of over 700 counted on the transect on The Masts. This was mainly due to very high numbers of Marbled White. Wall Browns were observed on both sections of the reserve. Dukes were again more plentiful on The Masts than on Bill Smyllie although there are a lot more Cowslips on Bill Smyllie than on The Masts. We may need to try to increase the numbers of Cowslips on The Masts.

25 Galloway cattle were put on Bill Smyllie section at the end of September and will move onto The Masts section at the end of October for 4 weeks grazing there.

We had our first weekend work parties last weekend. Unfortunately there were just a handful of us but we managed to cut two pathways from the top path to the lower path along Happy Valley. We also cut and burned the regrowth of Blackthorn from the top of Bill Smyllie. There is another work party on Bill Smyllie this coming Tuesday 29th Oct when we carry on with the work.

Contractors were brought in last November to clear a large area of scrub on Bill Smyllie. It was very bare at the start but did green up over the summer. However a lot of cleavers grew back so we had an evening work party to cut this and other unwanted growth.

The Cotswold Wardens have been helping us by laying a section of the Hawthorn hedge by the road at the top of Bill Smyllie. They completed a section last February and March and are now continuing on the next section of hedge. They are keen to do more work after Christmas and it suggested that they coppice Hazel on the lower slopes of the Bill Smyllie section.

The Heather restoration project is not proving very successful yet. For the last two years, heather seed has been collected from Heather growing in the original small enclosure and then broadcast over the new large enclosure. Heather seed is very

slow to germinate but we have not seen any Heather seedlings growing in the new big enclosure. This autumn we plan on collecting Heather seed and sowing the seed into plugs using soil from the area. If we can grow them on successfully at home we can then plant them out there. An added problem is that there are quite a few rabbits living in the enclosure so any emerging seedlings can be grazed off.

Appendix 7- Chris Wiltshire. Rough Bank Report.

ROUGH BANK WORK PARTIES 2019

Date	Vols	Hours	Task	
05/01/2019	13	78.45	Brash from last month burnt and further thinning & stumps treated. Tree across N fence cut up.	
17/02/2019	10	62.15	Fallen trees cut up, quarry path fence repaired, more tree thinning along track, brash burnt, wood stacked, stumps treated.	
01/03/2019	13+1	85.00	more tree thinning along track, brash burnt, wood stacked, stumps treated, brushcut along top fence.	
21/03/2019	14	88.80	Raking brash off lower slope and cutting up some trees left by contractors. Two bonfires on contract-	
11/05/2019	3	28.45	ors fire sites. Moving tree trunks off Cook's land. Cut up and remove timber left on Rob Cook's land by contractors. Clear brash & logs off grassland.	
12/06/2019	8+1	47.40	Remove vegetation from along North fenceline & remove fence wire, coil and stack it for contractor. Ragwort pulling on bank and remaining uncut areas	
24/07/2019	6	29.25	of Myers fields.	
30/09/2019	1+1	6.25	Review work for Cotwold Wardens and then start ash dieback assessments in G Myers.	
21/10/2019	1+1	8.75	Ash dieback survey from G Myers to the bank.	
CW's 2019 transect hours		80.05		514.55

9 work parties

2 days of turf height measurements and fixed point photography
Transects done on 28 days but only 25 valid

North fence installed early September by contractor (excellent job)

Cotswold Wardens reinforced bank of pond in G. Myers and cut large area of brambles at bottom of field.

Monday 21st Oct + 22nd track across L. Myers resurfaced along with area around trough in G. Myers

Appendix 8 - Simon Glover. Forest conservation officer report.

As always the SPBFs take centre stage in the Forest. Both remaining colonies at Linear Park and Moseley Green had an exceptional hatching of adults with up to fifteen seen at both sites the first weekend in June. The weather then went down hill and few were seen over the following weeks. Hopefully the good launch window enabled breeding to take place before the weather deteriorated.

The main problem currently is the lack of grazing especially at the Linear Park where fencing for grazing has been installed. Attempts have been made to get grazing going over the last six months with the possibility of pony grazing as the most likely outcome. In the meantime the Green Team of Forestry volunteers organised by Kate Wollen have a never ending workload.

Forest habitats are benefitting from large areas being opened up such as Woorgreens and Crab tree Hill and grazed via Foresters Forest and GWT which will benefit butterflies and hopefully future linkages of sites.

More good news on finance for habitat enhancement is the success the GWT have had in obtaining funds via the EU structural fund for ecological enhancement near towns. Cinderford was one of the successful bidding towns meaning ESIF money being concentrated on the Linear Park to introduce meanders back to Cinderford Brook and more habitat variety. It will be important to enhance habitats while not being detrimental to our butterfly breeding areas.

To increase the spbf habitat we still need to protect areas from the pigs which can damage grassland and make it unsuitable for nectar or foodplants

We concentrate on the fritillaries but need to be aware that we have probably one of the largest UK colonies of Wood White which had a good year again in 2019 and we need to be their guardians as well.

Appendix 9

9.1 Jennifer Gilbert - Cotswolds BftB project update.

1. Volunteer training workshops

- Adders – 2 workshops led and 15 sites surveyed this year. Sadly still no new adder sites found. Leckhampton Hill, Cleeve Common and Bull Banks still the only sites currently being surveyed by volunteers that have adders. This year we added an additional site near to Bull Banks on the Miserden Estate but so far no adders and very few reptiles at all. Aim to branch out to more privately owned (and therefore less disturbed) sites in 2020.
- Duke of Burgundy – 2 workshops covering both adults and larval feeding damage led. 11 new surveyors have helped survey 6 sites for both adults and larval feeding damage. Still awaiting full results from larval feeding damage however 0 seen at Bull's Cross, Huddinknoll and Snow's Farm, 4 seen at Juniper Hill. 1 seen at Rough Bank by a visitor – 0 seen by volunteers. 6 recorded at Painswick Beacon, however on reflection these may be misidentified. No other records from Painswick this year and no feeding damage found.
- Rock-rose Pot Beetle workshop led by Buglife. Several volunteers have revisited Stinchcombe/Rodborough Common while additional surveys by

Liam from Buglife discovered 1 beetle at Stinchcombe Hill and 3 at Breakheart Quarry – none were found in 2018.

- Large Blue surveys took place at Painswick Beacon and Cranham Common. No LBs seen at Cranham but several found at Painswick Beacon.
- Bumblebees – 2 workshops led by Bumblebee Conservation Trust, one beginner and one intermediate level. Ruderal Bumblebee was found on both workshops at Cranham Common – a very exciting find as this is a completely new site for this species! 5 days' worth of surveys took place for Ruderal Bumblebee and Red-shanked Carder Bee with Sinead from Bumblebee Conservation Trust following the intermediate workshop. Several volunteers who attended joined the surveys to help and get further identification experience. 11 sites were surveyed and lists made of all bumblebee species seen but unfortunately no Red-shanked or Ruderals found.
- Pasqueflower – training workshop for volunteers led by Plantlife. 5 sites surveyed including Barnsley Warren which had a total of 2480 plants but sadly 0 found at Rodborough Common this year despite several searches by a number of people. This was followed up by a seed collection day with Kew Garden's Millennium Seed Bank in June – approx. 6000 seeds were collected from Barnsley Warren. These are now being stored at the MSB however we have access to 50% of this collection in the future if we decide to do reintroductions. (Possibility for Rodborough if the new paddock grazing doesn't help the Pasqueflowers come back naturally).
- Fly Orchid – training workshop for volunteers led by Plantlife. 5 volunteers have since surveyed 7 sites. Results included 13 found at Painswick Beacon, 15 at Charlton Kings Common, 4 at Sheepscombe, 0 at Rough Bank and 0 at Shill Hill. However 70 counted in Upcote Plantation adjacent to Shill Hill.
- Bats – training workshop led by Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) for volunteers on using Audiomoths and Kaleidoscope for bat sound analysis. Training has supported the Greater & Lesser Horseshoe Bat surveys we have been carrying out at Rodborough Common. Audiomoths were deployed around 3 compartments at Rodborough before the cattle went in to get pre-grazing data and were also deployed once grazing began to see the difference in usage by GHBs and LHBs. Results are currently in the process of being analysed by BCT and our volunteers.
- Juniper – training workshop for volunteers led by Plantlife. Surveys for Juniper at Painswick Beacon have begun with volunteers with more planned for several other known Juniper sites.
- Rugged Oil Beetle – training workshop for volunteers led by Buglife this week. Surveys have already begun with existing volunteer surveyors and new surveys set to begin with new surveyors in the next couple of weeks. To date 6 new sites for Rugged Oil Beetles have been identified and hope to find more/learn more about their distribution within known sites this year.

2. Landowner/land manager training workshops

'Managing Your Grassland for Wildlife' workshops x 2 – covering all target species groups across two workshops jointly led with Buglife, Plantlife, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Bat Conservation Trust & Natural England. 26 landowners/conservation professionals and volunteers attended and a number of follow up site visits to be arranged.

3. Additional events

- Rococo After Dark – bat and moth night at Rococo Garden in May and August; Moth Madness event at Rococo Garden following bat and moth night in August
- Woodchester Park After Dark – bat walk at Woodchester Park joint with National Trust
- Guided walk with Cotswold Voluntary Wardens at Prestbury Hill
- Minchinhampton Marking Day
- Open Farm Sunday at Guiting Power – possibly not enough footfall to revisit next year.
- Wild Writing workshop – new workshop for this year and very successful. A total of 9 poems were produced and are being exhibited at the AGM. Hope to run this again in 2020 as proved to be a fantastic way to connect people to the wildlife of Rough Bank in a new and different way.
- Guided walk for Walking the Land art group – artwork based on Rough Bank and limestone grasslands is in the process of being produced and is being exhibited at the AGM. This will also be exhibited in full in the new year.
- Stroud Festival of Nature
- Cotswold Show weekend
- Sudeley Castle event
- Prinknash Garden Open Day event
- Seed Collection workshop with Kew Garden's Millennium Seed Bank. Almost 10,000 rock-rose seed collected during workshop which has been taken back and stored in the MSB. Following the workshop we attempted to collect seed from 3 of our target species. Only 1 seed pod was able to be collected from a Fly Orchid at Painswick Beacon while Purple Milk-vetch had already seeded. Unfortunately all the seed pods on the Narrow-leaved Helleborine at Rodborough Common had been removed with only one pod left intact so no seed was able to be collected.
- Two beginners film and photography workshops were run as part of the BftB film and photography competition

4. School visits

- Visit to Kingshill School in Cirencester to lead a mini-bioblitz around the school grounds with the after school Eco Club.
- Guided walks led for two schools – Rodborough Community Primary School and Gastrells Primary School – to Rodborough Common. Part of a project to get the schools producing butterfly artwork to be displayed at Rodborough Hidden Gardens and Sculpture Trail. Walk went around the common introducing children to the variety of butterflies including the Duke of Burgundy.

To end Sept 2019:

- 261 individual volunteers have volunteered with our project
- 752.5 days have been worked by volunteers
- 394 different people have learnt skills directly through workshops/practical work parties
- 3503 different people have been engaged with directly through the project

9.2 Julian Bendle - Cotswolds BftB project update.

“Limestone’s Living Legacies”- BftB project update for the period 28/10/2018 to 26/10/2019 (Julian Bendle)

Please note: The following only includes work on butterflies and moths and does not include any work which has been carried out in this period for our other project target species which include plants, beetles, bumblebees, bats and reptiles.

- **Large Blue Butterfly [LB]**

The specialist contractor [Dave Simcox, Habitat Designs] funded by the Cotswolds BftB project continued with the work required to reintroduce LB to additional sites in the Cotswolds. Pre BftB [Aug 2017] LB had been reintroduced to 4 sites in the Cotswolds. BftB project aim is to reintroduce it to at least one new site.

Site 1: 2017 + 2018 larvae reintroduced to a new site in the Cotswolds [712 caterpillars in total].

2019 no new caterpillars released at this first site. Adults recorded on a number of visits confirming that the right sort of ants *Myrmica sabuleti* had successfully found the larvae in 2017/18 and taken them back to their underground nest.

2019 surveys at this site estimated that more than 10,000 LB eggs were laid across the site, corresponding to perhaps some 200 egg laying females.

This winter installing X1 new water supply/livestock trough to allow better grazing of the site.

Site 2: 2019: Nearly 1100 larvae were reintroduced to a second new site, making this reintroduction the largest single LB reintroduction ever carried out in this country! $\frac{3}{4}$ of the larvae came from Cotswolds stock and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ from Somerset. More larvae will be released at this site next year.

To keep the sites in favourable condition for LB’s and the ants, targeted paddock grazing using temporary electric fencing has been funded and organised at the two reintroduction sites.

More cuttings of Thyme have been taken from three LB reintroduction sites and are being propagated at the Stroud Valleys Project nursery. Ancient Monument Consent has been granted by the Secretary of State to allow the planting of plug plants from last years’ cuttings to be planted within a Scheduled Ancient Monument at the first BftB reintroduction site!

With the help of volunteers 808 Marjoram plants have been planted and 48,000 marjoram seeds sown across 4 LB sites.

- **Duke of Burgundy Butterfly**

As per last year, two workshops were organised for volunteers in the identification of the adult butterfly and signs of larval feeding damage. Both BC and other

volunteers [as well as myself] spent considerable time surveying for adults, eggs and larval feeding damage at a number of sites.

Targeted paddock grazing using temporary electric fencing has been funded and organised at 6 Duke sites.

This winter installing X1 new water supply/livestock trough at a Duke site to allow better control of grazing.

- **Marsh Fritillary [MF]**

MF is confined now to just two sites in Gloucestershire south-east of Stroud, at Strawberry Banks and Westley Farm, both of which are privately owned.

Strawberry Banks:

Feb/March MF larval web surveys recorded 9 webs this year [7 in 2018], containing approximately 415 larvae. In May the maximum adult peak timed count was 23 [31 last year]. August web count of 15 [11 in 2018] and larger in size (number of larvae). Hopefully numbers are beginning to slowly pick back up.

Helped the owners to temporary fence areas of the site to prevent the ponies overgrazing the short turf areas and to encourage them to tackle the Tor grass problem areas. A happy evening chasing ponies!

Westley Farm:

A considerable amount of time has been spent helping the new owners to submit a higher tier CS agreement application. Organised quotes for nurseries to supply 3,000 Devils-bit Scabious plug plants and for contractors to plant them. This will help to create/restore a further 3ha of habitat. Under the FM2 [*“major preparatory work for priority species”*] element, the RPA [Rural Payments Agency] have agreed to 100% fund this work.

MF adult maximum peak timed count at Westley farm was 14 [4 in 2018].

Organised and funded contractors to clear scrub.

- **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**

Helped Chris Tracey with Pearl-bordered Fritillary count at the Cirencester Park Estate. Attended a site meeting with Chris and the forestry manager and have arranged for the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens to carry out habitat management on the estate this winter.

- **Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth**

Following several sightings of adult Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth at the Bill Smyllie Reserve near Cheltenham, Dan Hoare [BC Director of UK Conservation] and I spent a couple of hours searching Devils-bit scabious for larvae. Fantastic to find two tiny larvae [which Dan thought were probably 1st and 2nd instar] to confirm that breeding has successfully taken place, a first for the reserve!

- **Land owner/manager habitat management site advice visits**

Carried out 12 site advice visits to discuss habitat management for butterflies and moths including the specific species, Large Blue, Duke of Burgundy, Marsh Fritillary, Dingy Skipper and Dark Green Fritillary.

- **Organised and funded contractor works:**

Scrub removal, ruderal control and soil scrape creations at 7 sites to specifically benefit Large Blue, Duke of Burgundy, Marsh Fritillary, Dingy Skipper and Small Blue butterflies as well as other butterfly and moth species.

- **Volunteer habitat management work parties**

Organised and led 12 volunteer work parties [648 hours] with volunteers from the Cotswolds Voluntary Warden Service, Cirencester Royal Agricultural University students, Gloucester Vale Conservation Volunteers, Stroud Valleys Project and the Painswick Beacon Conservation Group.

Appendix 10- Trish Atkinson, Butterfly monitoring in Gloucestershire

Butterfly monitoring has continued again this year in various forms. We have about 26 transects operating on mainly managed sites, 45 Wider Countryside Butterfly Surveys recording butterflies in the wider countryside, recorders visiting various butterfly key sites in the county, a few recorders targeting previously unrecorded 1km squares (which we call white squares as there are white spaces on the county distribution map) and of course many casual records obtained throughout the county.

For the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey, Gloucestershire Branch recorded 43 squares last year and had the second highest number of squares of all the branches in the country. However we didn't get quite as many squares recorded this year. Recorders who couldn't record at their squares this year plan to continue as usual next year so we are hoping that the number should increase next year. In addition, Head Office have sent us 5 new squares of which 4 are in the Stroud area. We have lots of active recorders in this area so I'm hoping that we'll be able to find recorders to take them on.

Key sites records have started to come in but I'm expecting quite a few more so I can't yet report on how this has gone, but I can report that last year, the branch recorded at 130 key sites. We have recorded at over 250 key sites at some point in the last 10 years since this project was started.

We have had quite good coverage of our key sites in the Cotswolds around Stroud and Dursley etc, reasonably coverage in the area north of that but poor coverage in the North Cotswolds area and the Forest of Dean. In the spring this year I emailed about 100 members living in the North Cotswolds to ask if they could do some recording. I was pleased to get replies from 10 members who said that they would like to help. I have now received records from 4 of these 10 so far, in fact one person has recorded on 8 sites which is fantastic.

If you did some key site recording this summer, then please send your records to your area coordinator. If you would like to have a go at key site recording next year, then please contact me in the first instance and then I can put you in touch with your area coordinator. If you would like to start recording but feel that your ID skills are not good enough, then maybe come along to our ID course next summer.

So why are we doing all this recording? How is it useful? Well all key sites records go into QGIS, a mapping system used by Head Office. We can monitor how well the recording is going and which areas need more recording etc. All records go into the county butterfly records database operated by Chris and Vic. Distribution maps of each species can then be produced. All our key sites records are very useful to

Head Office staff like Julian and Jen for the Back from the Brink project and Jenny Plackett, our regional conservation officer.

Finally, I want to thank all recorders for their time and efforts not just doing the recording but also filling in the forms afterwards which I must admit is not as enjoyable as actually doing the recording itself.